

April 5, 2017

SEXUALLY ACTIVE RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO GET TALKING AND GET TESTED DURING NATIONAL STD AWARENESS MONTH



Contact:

Jennifer S. Sexton
Jennifer.Sexton@flhealth.gov
941-624-7200 ext. 7279

Port Charlotte, Fla. — Nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur in the United States every year costing the American healthcare system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone, says a report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In light of these numbers, the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County is promoting National STD Awareness Month throughout the month of April as a time to get screened for potential infections.

America's youth shoulder a substantial burden of these infections. The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County has found positive results for sexually transmitted infections in 2016 largely in the 20-24 age group, and only slightly less in the 15-19 age group.

"The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County recommends that all sexually active residents get talking and get tested, regardless of age," stated Dr. Frank Lepore, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County (DOH-Charlotte). "If you are comfortable being intimate with your partner, you should be comfortable having the conversation about using condoms and getting tested for STDs."

The high incidence of STDs in the general population suggests that many Americans are at risk of exposure, underscoring the need for prevention. Abstaining from sex, reducing the number of sexual partners, and consistently and correctly using condoms are all effective prevention strategies. DOH-Charlotte offers free condoms in the lobby of their 1100 Loveland Boulevard location, and distributes additional condoms to various locations throughout the county.

Safe, effective vaccines are also available to prevent hepatitis B and some types of the human papillomavirus (HPV) that cause disease and cancer. And for all individuals who are sexually active – particularly young people – STD screening and prompt treatment (if infected) are critical to protect a person's health and prevent transmission to others.

DOH-Charlotte offers testing and treatment in their clinic, with fees based on a sliding scale. Free testing for chlamydia, gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis, if risk factors are present, is offered from 1-4 p.m. on Tuesdays at Gulf Cove United Methodist Church at 1100 S McCall Rd. Additional testing opportunities in support of National STD Awareness Month will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, April 14 at Florida SouthWestern State College and from 9 a.m. to 1

p.m. on Wednesday, April 19 at the Charlotte Wellness Fair, which will be held at the Cultural Center.

For more information about the free testing being offered in April, please call Jacqueline Martin at (941) 624-7200 extension 7233.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.